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A NEW FACTOR IN THE ELEMENTARY-SCHOOL CURRICULUM.

PREVIOUS to the invention of the printing press there was no elementary school. The education of children was provided by other agencies, among which the family was most important. The elementary school, as a separate institution, originated in the democratic movement that swept over western Europe during the closing years of the Middle Ages and the centuries immediately following. Its function, at first, was not to take charge of those phases of education previously attended to by the family, but to supplement the work by supplying the child with tools made necessary by changed social conditions. The practical education supplied by the family was now found to be insufficient. A demand arose on the part of the people for the opportunity to learn how to read, write, and compute simple arithmetical processes. In response to this demand the elementary school arose, and the three R's long reigned supreme.

But times change. The needs of one age are not identical with those of another. As a consequence of this fact, the institutions organized to meet the demands of one age need constantly to adjust themselves to changing conditions in order to render to society the service that is due.

Stupendous changes have taken place in society since the organization of the elementary school. Revolutions in the

industrial and political world have transformed the entire social fabric. The school has felt the action of the new forces and has recognized, in a measure, the validity of the claims represented by each. The scientific spirit, so strong during the last decade, has made itself felt; and we have, in addition to the older geography, the elements of nearly every physical and natural science. Political forces have extended throughout the length and breadth of the land, and appear in the elementary curriculum in the form of civics, political history, and lessons in patriotism. Increasing wealth and leisure are making it possible for art to flourish, and in many quarters it now occupies an important place in the elementary curriculum. The rapid growth of cities, which has attended the development of the factory system, has crowded people together as never before. The consciousness of social responsibility that has been developed in the process is making itself felt, and appears in the school in the demand for a place for the study of social conditions and means of amelioration. The commercial spirit that dominates the age operates to place an emphasis upon the more utilitarian aspects of life. The manual-training movement, which originated in northwestern Europe in the desire to preserve, through school instruction, the technique that was threatening to disappear, has extended to this country, and, under the combined influence of utilitarian and educational forces, has been added to the curriculum. And, finally, educators have become conscious of the fact that there is a deeper significance in the simple house industries in which all children formerly participated than the practical result obtained; and they are beginning to demand an opportunity for the child to participate in industries that have been transferred from the home to the factory. In spite of all these new and vigorous forces, tradition is still powerful and clings to a Middle-Age formalism with a tenacity that would do credit to a better cause.

It is not strange that for several years the subjects corresponding to such diverse forces as these just enumerated should fail to find in one another mutual support. There has not yet been time for the reconciliation to be made. The lack of unity

has been felt in many places, and attempts have been made, both in theory and in practice, to supply the need. Many tendencies in school practice indicate that the time is ripe for more organized effort than has hitherto been possible. There is less tendency than formerly to occupy children with mere "busy-work." There is an increasing eagerness on the part of teachers of all grades to avail themselves of any opportunity by means of which they can substitute for isolated activities occupations vitally related to the content studies of the period. Teachers of manual training are groping about in search of some clue to the problem of how to co-operate with teachers of other subjects and at the same time preserve the integrity of their own work. The same tendency is manifest in the desire to illustrate the content studies by means of various forms of hand-work. Such tendencies as these, although promising with reference to the temper of the times, are superficial and temporary in their effect. They furnish no principle by means of which to unite head, heart, and hand in a process sufficiently broad and far-reaching in its effects to be truly educative.

The many attempts of educational philosophers to discover a unifying principle need not be reviewed at this time. They serve to suggest that, theoretically at least, the need of such a principle has long been felt. Experiment has added the weight of its evidence toward the same end. Many noteworthy contributions have been made. But, in spite of all these, the curriculum of the elementary school, except in specially favored localities, is in nearly as confused a state as ever.

During the past ten years the attention of the educational world has been focused upon the work of Professor John Dewey. He, more than any other educational philosopher, embodies the spirit of the new age and finds a genuine reconciliation of conflicting forces within the educational process itself. His work thus stands in marked contrast to previous attempts at unification which have sought a principle of unity in some one phase of the process or from some external source. His analysis of the educational process as to its form and its content is, perhaps, the most remarkable contribution that has yet been made to

educational philosophy.* In respect to content, he classifies the various forces in the educational process under two heads: the individual and the social. The individual factor corresponds to the psychological conception of the process and represents the means, the agency, the method; while the social factor corresponds to the social conception of the process and represents the end, the work to be done, the subject-matter. The point that he emphasizes throughout the discussion is the fact that each of these conceptions, abstracted from the educational process, is but a partial truth, requiring the other in order to give it its true meaning.

Perhaps the most significant fact with reference to the work of Professor Dewey is his educational laboratory, where he is bringing his educational theories to a practical test in the teaching of children of all ages. The general interest manifested in this school the world over indicates the general belief that problems are being worked out there that promise rich results along educational lines.

It is very probable that some of the most fruitful work of this period will be along lines which will render available for general use materials necessary in order to apply the principle that Professor Dewey has been most successful in establishing. Many difficulties are now in the way of the teacher who would make a practical application of the principles. But the very fact that we are becoming conscious of these circumstances as difficulties is a most favorable sign, and promises much toward securing a more rational adjustment than has hitherto been possible.

While such questions are being worked out in a practical way, an attempt is being made to bring to the problem of the elementary school another force which has not generally been recognized as having any relation to the problem. Anthropology is a comparatively new science. The difficulties encountered in the collection of the necessary data and in the interpretation of materials are such as to require the use of refined intellectual

* A complete exposition of this subject may be found in PROFESSOR DEWEY'S unpublished lectures on the "Philosophy of Education."

tools. For the development of these tools anthropology had to await the development of geology, biology, psychology, sociology, and other kindred sciences. But the organic character of society is illustrated here as elsewhere, and anthropology is now ready to render service to the sciences to which it owes its rise. An examination of its relation to the various sciences and arts would well repay the labor involved in a careful investigation of the subject. But that is too large a subject for this occasion. Attention is invited at this time to but one phase of the larger subject—the relation of anthropology to the curriculum of the elementary school.

The curriculum represents the social factor in the educational process. It corresponds to the stimulus, the individual factor being represented by the response. Since stimulus and response are but two phases of one activity, it is evident that the complexity of the stimulus bears a direct relation to the complexity of the response. That which constitutes the stimulus in a given case is not the external object itself, but the object functioning with reference to the individual. Whether an object functions as a stimulus in a given situation depends upon its relation to the attitudes of the child. These attitudes, which are largely the product of remote racial activities, and hence social products in a measure from the first, determine, within fairly definite limits, the nature and complexity of social stimuli. Manifestly it is the part of education to discover these attitudes, in order that materials may be presented that are best adapted to promote the normal growth of the child. It is likewise important to guard against the use of materials that are liable to occasion experiences not conducive to such growth.

Anthropology has made important contributions to the study of the child's attitudes, and, as the science develops, it will undoubtedly yield still greater results. Assuming that the reader is familiar with these results and with the literature of mental development, let us pass directly to the consideration of the relation of anthropology to the elementary curriculum.

Because the child's attitudes are yet comparatively simple, because they have not yet been overlaid by complex social

habits, the social forces represented in our highly organized institutions cannot function completely in his life. The greater part of what they represent, not being appropriated by the child, remains as something external and quite foreign to his experience. There are some phases of the complex life about him that he can experience, but too often that which is most vital is obscured in the complexity of the situation. This is as true with reference to the social forces represented in a text-book as with reference to the industrial and social processes observed in the community. In either case it is impossible for the child to gain an experience that is truly educative, for the process represents a technique too advanced for him to control. As long as such a relation exists between the ability of the child and the technique involved in the subject-matter of study, the question of the unification of the curriculum must remain forever unsolved, for the educational process from which the principle of unification is derived is not present. But, if the partial experiences of the child with reference to the complex life about him are supplemented by experiences similar in kind, but of a type suited to his powers, he can deal with the situation in an adequate way; and, if he be encouraged to invent simple ways of improving the crude processes, he gradually acquires such an insight and control as to enable him to recognize the essential elements in the more complex processes of civilized life. He is thereby enabled to participate more fully in the life of the present, because he has had the opportunity to experience it in more elementary forms.

Under such circumstances the unification of the curriculum is a simple matter, provided the anthropological materials necessary in order to present the simple forms of present problems are available. Under such favorable conditions the various subjects of the curriculum appear as different phases of one process. The industrial activities of the stage of culture under consideration furnish a proper field for manual training, which, enriched and liberalized by the social experiences of the race which called forth and developed the activity, is no longer open to the criticism that it serves merely utilitarian needs. These experi-

ences, which form the social setting for the child's constructive activities, constitute the history of this period.

Constructive activity is also the means of acquiring an experience which is the foundation of the sciences and arts. The science of the child is but one phase of his constructive activity. This activity requires that the child of seven years exploit his environment in the search of raw materials which he requires for his constructive work; that he experiment with them until he finds a way of rendering obstinate materials more pliable, and crooked ones straight; that he invent tools and devices of various kinds by means of which he can economize his own energy, or apply a motive power other than that of his own muscles; that he exploit his own neighborhood with reference to the fitness of different localities to supply the needs of the various hunting, fishing, pastoral, agricultural, mining, or trading people that he may be interested in at the time. Such activities as these bring the child into close contact with the earth as the source of supply and enable him to gain control over his own powers. Thus the way is paved for a more intelligent control over the materials and forces of his natural environment.

The child's spontaneous art activities, as well as his interest in art products, indicate that there is much in the art of primitive peoples that is necessary in order to pave the way to an appreciation of the higher art forms. In fact, each subject of the curriculum finds the germ of its development in the life of primitive peoples. When this fact is more generally recognized, when all subjects of the curriculum are developed naturally, it will be possible for the child to translate the subject-matter into terms of his own practical activities. This is the essential condition in order to secure a unified curriculum. When subjects are presented that are too far beyond the reach of the child to become a part of his experience, when he is obliged to use words that have little significance to him, the search for a unifying principle must be in vain.

The question of organizing constructive activities so as to present well-graded steps in the evolution of technique is a fundamental one. It is not at all strange that many teachers—

who appreciate its importance, and who have secured it by a logical series of constructive activities with little or no relation to the curriculum as a whole—hesitate to change their position. But, if it can be shown that it is possible to organize the curriculum so that the various subjects will stand in mutually helpful relations, while each preserves its own individuality, there will be less reluctance in making the change.

One of the most important considerations in determining the gradation of the steps in technique is the demand made by each upon the physical co-ordinations of the child. His spontaneous activities furnish the clue to this, and it is always possible to find stimulating problems which represent important achievements of the race at a time when its problems in technique were similar to those with which the child is now grappling. When we consider that the type of the child's physical co-ordinations was fixed by the activities of primitive people, and that the type of his emotional and intellectual attitudes is largely a product of that time, from the point of view of the satisfaction of the child in the use of his powers the path marked out by the race is a safe guide. When, on the other hand, we consider that our forefathers, when still in the stages of savagery and barbarism, acquired a sympathetic knowledge of nearly every raw material now used for manufacturing purposes, that they acquired an almost inimitable skill in many industrial processes, that they worked out all of the mechanical principles that have yet been discovered, and that the problems that they worked out during the long ages are the basis of the civilization of today, we cannot fail to recognize that the history of their achievements furnishes a variety of technical sequences of inestimable value for educational purposes. Sequences which exhibit the development of tools, utensils, modes of cooking and serving food, habitations, modes of defense, means of travel and transportation by land and water, clothing, ornament, musical instruments, etc.—all these are especially valuable if made use of at a time when the technique of the processes involved is sufficiently difficult to stimulate and sufficiently simple to be worked out thoroughly enough to secure educational results.

As the child develops, the materials of the curriculum should change to keep pace with the change in his attitudes and powers. To assume that the materials derived from the study of anthropology are of equal importance at all times during the elementary-school period would be a mistake. It would likewise be a mistake to assume that all other considerations should yield place to the establishment of a course of study based upon anthropology. The social factor is but one phase of the educational process, and anthropology at no time represents the whole of the social factor. Unless anthropological material is so used as to function with reference to the present and the future, it falls short of its real mission. It is an essential factor in the educational process only when it represents a stimulus that appeals to the child more powerfully and more fruitfully than social stimuli selected from other stages in the development of society. A technique founded upon the nature of the child and upon the successive achievements of the race along cumulative lines is a safer one to follow than one which is an abstraction from various processes related only in respect to technique. It has the advantage of a more pronounced individuality than a purely logical course can ever have; and, in addition, it has associations which cannot fail to stimulate the inquiring attitude along lines fundamental in the development of the sciences and arts.

Anthropology is of service, also, in arousing an interest in public works. Its simplest beginnings may be illustrated in the improvement made in such natural means of protection as trees, islands, rocky peninsulas, and marshes; the erection of pile dwellings in lakes; the protection of springs and quarries; the building of roads and bridges, and the digging of canals and irrigating ditches. Such activities furnish the child basal concepts of service in interpreting the public works in his own city. Anthropology presents to the child a simple society. Its social forces are clear and well defined. Motives are evident. Processes are simple and fairly direct. Technique is simple, and its relation to the process is evident. The child is thus able to perceive the need, and, the need once realized, the child is alert in inventing ways of meeting it.

The limitations now placed upon practical activity in the schoolroom are such that much of the child's interest in public works must expend itself in an illustrative and a dramatic rather than in a more real way. The facilities afforded by playgrounds and the unoccupied land in the vicinity may be made use of in many cases. Where such opportunities are not present it is important that the means of illustration be supplemented by activities which call forth such a degree of co-operative effort as is represented in the real construction of the work. The magnificent public works of ancient times are significant, not with reference to the huge piles of masonry which appear in the external product, not with reference to the form, although that is not a matter of indifference, but with reference to the social conditions of the people whose ideas they embody. Public works have a larger place in the curriculum of the elementary school than is usually accredited to them. They serve to widen the sympathies and to arouse a consciousness of a larger self than those activities which have reference merely to the individual, the family, or smaller social groups. It is to anthropology that we must look for the most valuable racial experiences available for the enrichment of the child's first efforts along these lines.

When anthropological research shall have become more extended and its results organized with reference to educational needs, the difficulty that teachers now feel in attempting to correlate the various subjects in the curriculum will be greatly minimized, if they do not entirely disappear. The service which anthropology can render is to furnish the fundamental facts with reference to the typical activities in the successive stages of primitive culture. These facts once in the possession of one fitted by interest and training for the work of interpretation and organization, a course of study can readily be outlined which will represent the social factor of the educational process more vitally than ever before.

With the development of anthropology, and with the growth of the departments of education in our great universities, it ought not to be necessary for teachers in the elementary schools

to be handicapped much longer for the lack of proper materials, or for children to be deprived of their full heritage from the past. We can no longer close our eyes to the significance of the long period of development from which our civilization has but recently emerged. We cannot cut loose from the past if we would. We dare not build our educational institutions upon any other foundation than that which has been marked out for us by the action of both physical and social heredity. The activities of our prehistoric forefathers condition every instinctive act of our lives. They form the larger element in the motive of our most refined activities. They contain the germ of all in life that we most prize.

When specialists in anthropology and education shall have restored the means of appropriating a larger share of our heritage, when through their united efforts there is a more general understanding of the nature of the child and his relation to the various social forces in life, the teacher will find her work less irksome, and the child will find in the activities of the school the satisfaction that comes from a successful use of his own powers. The materials in the educational process are not static. They are rich in associations. They call forth varied trains of imagery. They speak in a language intelligible to the child, for he recognizes them as a part of his own activity.

Anthropology, then, is one factor in the education of the child. It serves to utilize energy which might otherwise become wasted or expended in anti-social forms, and to enrich the practical activities of the child by relating them to society. It makes possible a natural unification of the various subjects of the curriculum, securing to each a richer and fuller development by establishing its fundamental relations with the others. It makes it possible for the child to conceive of the work of the school as akin to that in the larger world. It is beginning to render to the cause of elementary education such a service as that rendered by industrial activities in the upbuilding and maintaining of society.

The following list of recent books and articles serves to indicate the direction that the educational thought of the time is taking with reference to the questions which are considered in the above article :

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The Child: A Study in the Evolution of Man. *Ibid.*
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- DEWEY, JOHN. The Philosophy of Education. (Unpublished lectures.)
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The Educational Situation. *Ibid.*
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The Place of Manual Training in the Elementary Course of Study. *Manual Training Magazine*, Vol. II, p. 193.
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- DOPP, KATHARINE E. The Place of Industry in Elementary Education. *Ibid.*
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- EBY, F. The Educational Value of Manual Constructive Work. *Education*, Vol. XVIII, p. 49.
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- HALL, G. STANLEY. Story of a Sand Pile. *Scribner's Magazine*, Vol. III.
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- RICE, EMILY J. Social Occupations in History. *Course of Study*, Chicago Institute, Vol. I, p. 782.
Constructive Work in History. *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 406.

- RICHARDS, ARTHUR W. The Thought Side of Manual Training. *Manual Training Magazine*, Vol. III, p. 61.
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- SMALL, ALBION W. Some Demands of Sociology upon Pedagogy. *AMERICAN JOURNAL OF SOCIOLOGY*, Vol. II, p. 839.
- THOMAS, W. I. The Gaming Instinct. *Ibid.*, Vol. VI, p. 750.
- Sex in Primitive Industry. *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 474.
- VANDEWALKER, NINA C. The Culture-Epoch Theory from an Anthropological Standpoint. *Educational Review*, Vol. XV, p. 374.
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- YOUNG, ELLA FLAGG. Isolation in the School. The University of Chicago Press.
- The Elementary School Teacher and Course of Study. Ibid.*

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